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Afghanistan Situation Report



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21 October 1986

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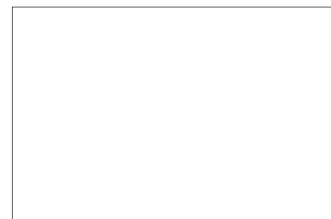
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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Recent Soviet combat operations focused, in part, on securing roads to be used by the six regiments that were scheduled to leave Afghanistan. In eastern Afghanistan, Afghan forces, with Soviet support, have been conducting counterinsurgent operations around 'Ali Kheyl.

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RESISTANCE DELEGATION TO ATTEND OIC SUMMIT?

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Kuwait, which will host the summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference in January 1987, has sought to limit attendance of an Afghan resistance delegation, probably as a good faith gesture to the USSR.

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JAMIAT PROBLEMS IN THE SALANG AREA

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Jamiat-i-Islami guerrilla forces in the Salang area are experiencing a number of problems. Failure to resolve them could hamper insurgent commander Masood's efforts to expand the insurgency in northern Afghanistan.

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DESTROYING THE MISSILE SUPPORT FACILITY

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The successful attack on the Afghan regime air defense missile support facility and ammunition depot in Kabul in late August was the result of good tactical planning by insurgent forces

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PERSPECTIVE

SUPPLYING THE INSURGENTS IN HERAT

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Ismail Khan, leader of the Jamiat-i-Islami forces in Herat, is experiencing some difficulties in arming and supplying insurgents under his command, although the Herati guerrillas continue to prevent the Soviets from gaining control over Afghanistan's third-largest city.

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This document was prepared by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments on the issues raised in the publication should be directed to

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ENSURING A SAFE WITHDRAWAL

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Soviet and Afghan regime forces recently conducted extensive combat operations along the routes of withdrawing Soviet regiments.

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both Soviet motorized rifle regiments were out of garrison at Herat, probably on operations around the city.

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In early October, Afghan and Soviet forces launched a major operation in the 'Ali Kheyl area of Paktia Province. In part, it probably was in response to heavy insurgent pressure on the Afghan garrison there, although it also may have been an effort to curb the large numbers of insurgent caravans moving from Teri Mangal into Afghanistan.

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Afghan Army units from both Ghazni and Gardevz participated in the 'Ali Kheyl operations.

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Soviet attack helicopters were supporting the offensive.

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RESISTANCE TO ATTEND OIC SUMMIT?

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Kuwait, as host of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in January 1987, is seeking to discourage the attendance of an official Afghan resistance delegation, probably as a good-faith gesture to the Soviet Union. The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry Secretary General told US Embassy officials that Kuwait will invite only government representatives to the summit. He said that it was up to the OIC Secretariat

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and not Kuwait to invite an Afghan resistance delegation to the summit. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] an Afghan resistance delegation will probably be granted guest status similar to what the insurgents had at the last OIC meeting. [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: Kuwait almost certainly will accept some form of Afghan representation at the summit to avoid negative diplomatic repercussions from the issue. By specifying the participants, Kuwait probably is signaling that the Afghans should not expect as much publicity as they received at last year's meeting. Even so, Kuwait probably will continue to provide some private financial assistance to the resistance, call for the withdrawal of Soviet forces, and support the Afghan resolution as it did at last year's OIC summit. Its stance on seating the resistance at the summit is a low-cost means of underscoring its recently improved ties to Moscow, without harming its Islamic credentials. [REDACTED]

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JAMIAT PROBLEMS IN THE SALANG AREA [REDACTED]

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COMMENT: Masood's concentration on organizational activities in the northern provinces over the past year has apparently caused a diversion of resources from the Panjsher Valley area. His forces in Salang--through which the Termez-Kabul highway and his supply lines via the Ghowr Band Valley run--are also frequently under pressure from rival Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin) insurgents. The loss of the Salang area, either to rival guerrillas or to the regime, would be a major setback to Masood's efforts to supply his expanding forces in the north. [REDACTED]

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DESTROYING THE MISSILE FACILITY

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The successful attack on the air defense missile support facility and ammunition depot in western Kabul on 27 August resulted from good tactical planning by insurgent forces,

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On the night of the attack, eight insurgents from a Hizbi Islami (Khalis) group commanded by Abdul Haq infiltrated Kabul's perimeter defenses to within five kilometers of the missile support facility and prepared three rocket launch sites. Eight rockets, set with a one-hour time delay, ignited stored ordnance. The guerrillas conducted diversionary rocket attacks in southeastern Kabul the day before the strike.

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COMMENT: The execution of the attack on the missile facility required planning and coordination to circumvent Soviet and Afghan defenses surrounding the capital city. In addition, the sharp increase in rocket attacks on Kabul in July and the damage inflicted on the Soviet ammunition dump at nearby Bagram probably had increased the readiness of security forces. The failure of Afghan forces to prevent the attack on the missile facility and to stop rocket attacks on Kabul since then has been a major embarrassment for the regime.

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IN BRIEF

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The US Embassy in Kabul has indicated that the two countries plan to permit the Afghan airline to inaugurate a Kabul-Frankfurt-London-Paris service soon; the French Government has delayed a decision. The British and West Germans probably want to be accommodating to safeguard continued use of Afghan air space by their airlines.

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-- A shipment of humanitarian goods for the Afghan regime from the German Democratic Republic arrived in Kabul on 7 October, according to press reports. The regime probably hopes to use

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the shipment--which consisted mainly of medicines, orthopedic supplies, and education materials--to counter the favorable publicity generated by the recently initiated US cross-border humanitarian aid program for Afghans. []

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- Several newspaper articles in Leningrad have recently complained about public indifference to the welfare of returning Afghan veterans. The articles, by publicly recognizing service in Afghanistan, are a nod by the local media chiefs to the military. Soviet authorities probably do not want to stimulate undue scrutiny of the war, however. []

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- Maulawi Abdul Jamil Zarifi--a Tajik member of the DRA Revolutionary Council, former governor of Balkh Province, and provincial leader of the regime's National Fatherland Front--became Minister of Islamic Affairs and Endowment on 16 October, according to press reports. An Islamic figure long involved in party and government affairs, he will help the regime to portray itself as open to the inclusion of various ethnic and religious elements. []

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- Demonstrations on 19 October against Soviet policy in Afghanistan disrupted the closing ceremonies of the World Peace Congress in Copenhagen, according to press reports. About 50 demonstrators shouted anti-Soviet slogans and fought with security officials at the Soviet-front conference. []

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- A Soviet professor, in Stuttgart to give a lecture as part of "Soviet Week," was attacked by Afghan nationals on 16 October. The five Afghan assailants also set fire to a Soviet flag

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at the lecture, according to press reports.

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-- Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi became spokesman of the resistance alliance on 21 October, according to the US Embassy in Islamabad. Although the three-month term was to have begun on 1 October, other resistance leaders have agreed to let Nabi serve a full 90 days, ending 21 January.

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PERSPECTIVE**SUPPLYING THE INSURGENTS IN HERAT**

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Ismail Khan--leader of the Jamiat-i-Islami forces in Herat--is facing some difficulties in arming and supplying the approximately 15,000 insurgents under his command

Intensified Soviet interdiction efforts and the loss of supply routes from Iran have sharply increased transportation costs and have resulted in periodic shortages of weapons, ammunition, and food supplies in Herat. These shortages have been offset, in part, by an overall increase in outside deliveries and by a continued reliance on captured weapons and arms purchased on the black market. Ismail Khan's forces have managed to maintain a relatively high level of activity despite their supply difficulties.

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Sources Of Supply

The resistance forces in Herat under Ismail Khan obtain their weapons, ammunition, and supplies from a variety of sources. Some materiel is obtained as booty.

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about 80 percent of Khan's small-arms supplies are captured.

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The insurgents also purchase arms and munitions on the black market, including materiel that has been sold by Afghan government troops--and occasionally by Soviet military personnel.

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Other materiel is obtained from the Jamiat-i-Islami organization in Pakistan. Prior to 1985, the Jamiat lacked sufficient supplies to provide a steady source of weapons and munitions for the Herati forces

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. During 1985, however, the Jamiat increased support to Ismail Khan's forces including, for the first time, SA-7 surface-to-air missiles and BM-12 multiple rocket launchers.

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Iran's Role

Interference from Iranian authorities has contributed to Ismail Khan's difficulty in supplying his forces. Supplies from Pakistan to Herat insurgents once were brought in mainly via Iran.* But in 1985 resistance forces started encountering lengthier delays in moving supplies through Iranian territory.

[redacted] insurgents now sometimes must wait as long as nine months to obtain permission to transport supplies through Iran. Furthermore, in early 1985 Iranian authorities began to require visas for Ismail Khan's insurgents entering Iran from Pakistan. [redacted]

As a result of the difficulties of the Iranian link, Ismail Khan established new supply routes through the Afghan interior beginning in the fall of 1985.

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[redacted] the trip by truck from the border to Sangin takes about two days, and the pack animal caravans take approximately 12 days to travel to Herat. The major portion of the route is open year round; passes in the mountains of Ghowr Province are closed by snow for only a few days at a time from late December to early February. [redacted]

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Soviet Interdiction Efforts

Since 1985, Soviet and Afghan regime forces have intensified efforts to interdict insurgent supply routes leading from Pakistan to Herat [redacted]. These efforts--which include mining operations, establishment of militia posts, and airstrikes--have increased the risk and cost of transporting supplies through the Afghan interior. [redacted]

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Ismail Khan's forces have also adopted a number of strategies to lessen the risk of interdiction. [redacted]

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[redacted] truck convoys are small, escorted by heavily armed insurgents, and travel only at night. Ismail Khan has established a series of posts en route, including a small post at Arghastan and a brigade-size unit at Khak-rez in Qandahar Province, to increase security. In addition, [redacted]

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[redacted] Ismail Khan's forces cooperate closely with other resistance groups--including groups affiliated with Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin), Hizbi Islami (Khalis), and Sayyaf's Ittihad-i-Islami Barai Azadi Afghanistan--to keep the supply route open. [redacted]

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Impact

Despite supply constraints, the insurgents in Herat have prevented Soviet and Afghan regime forces from gaining control over Afghanistan's third-largest city. Moreover, the guerrillas remain a serious threat to enemy convoys in the area. [redacted]

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The Soviet's have increased interdiction efforts, but we believe Ismail Khan probably is now receiving more supplies than ever from outside sources. His most serious supply challenge, in our opinion, is to obtain increased funding to buy more weapons from local sources, pay for rising transportation costs, and purchase



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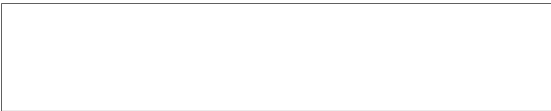


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transport vehicles and pack animals.



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